

Dumas ends visit to Beirut with aid plans

BEIRUT (R) — French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas, ending a two-day visit to Beirut, said Friday his country was studying ways to help Lebanon's war-shattered economy. "We discussed infrastructure and rehabilitation ... (French) experts are here and have made studies on electricity, water, and telecommunications," Mr. Dumas told reporters at a news conference before leaving Beirut. Mr. Dumas, the highest ranking French minister to visit Lebanon in six years, met President Elias Hrawi, House Speaker Hussein Huseini, Prime Minister Omar Karami, Foreign Minister Paris Bonnet, and religious leaders. The French minister said on Thursday his talks touched on the Lebanese army receiving helicopter supplies from France in return for Mirage fighters Beirut bought from Paris last year. Civil war broke out in 1975. The Lebanese government estimates it cost \$1 billion. The damage to the economic infrastructure has suffered during the country's 15 years of civil war. Mr. Dumas said France was backing Lebanon in its campaign to regain a 15-kilometre deep Israeli-held "security zone" in the south and other Lebanese areas where Syria has some 40,000 troops deployed with the approval of the Beirut government.

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**Sharif Zeid
assured of
yes' vote
in House**

By Mariana M. Shashin
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

Talks resume Monday; problems partially solved

By Nermene Murad in Washington

AFTER TWO DAYS of drawn-out "corridor diplomacy," bilateral talks between leaders of the joint Jordanian-Palestinian and Israeli delegations adjourned for the weekend, having established the basis for independent Palestinian representation but falling short of reaching accord on mechanisms to resume negotiations on this basis.

According to informed sources, "there is a possibility" that the three leaders of the delegations will meet Sunday to iron out remaining differences on establishing the two-track approach. If the meeting takes place and agreement is reached on mechanisms and agenda for continuing the talks the full delegations could start launching substantive negotiations in the

officially designated rooms at the U.S. State Department on Monday.

If the meeting does not take place, however, the leaders of the delegations will go back to their corridor at the official site and take up negotiations from where they left off on Thursday. It all depends on contacts over the weekend, the sources said.

The talks over the past two days have been defined by Jordanian delegates as "questions of principles" which may be procedural in nature but have "great substantive impact" on the development of negotiations.

"The issues that are being discussed are not trivial procedural issues. They are questions of principles which have to be established and agreed upon from the beginning," Jawad Anani, a senior Jordanian delegate, told the Jordan Times in an interview.

"There is a common understanding

that the emphasis on corridor diplomacy and procedural matters is not warranted. Some think it is a waste of time, but to us the issues are of principal value," Dr. Anani said. "Their solution now will affect to a great degree the future of deliberation agenda items."

The Israeli delegation accepted the two-track approach to its talks with the parties in the joint delegation. Thursday but snags remained over how often a plenary meeting, which would bring the joint delegation and Israelis together, would meet and how many delegates from each of the third parties would attend.

According to Dr. Anani, the Israelis have acknowledged the two-track approach and agreement has been reached that the joint delegation would be considered to be composed of two parties — Jordanian party and a Palestinian one.

During the two days of proposals and counter-proposals, the Israelis were trying to undermine the Palestinian's equal status with other parties while the Jordanians and Palestinians

were careful to reject any moves which would undermine the Palestinian national status.

"We had a long discussion over the naming of the two tracks," Dr. Anani explained. "While the Israelis wanted them to be called Israel-Jordan and an Israel-Palestinian track we insisted that if Israel did not acquiesce to calling the second track an Israel-Palestine track then it should be the Israel-Palestinian track to ensure equality," he said.

"One letter, in this case (for Israeli), took a long time to negotiate and confirm. We needed to address details closely to avoid their ramifications on substance," Dr. Anani added.

"The bottom line is do the Palestinians have a separate identity, representation and personality? The Israelis wanted to obviate that. That is why we had to negotiate the two tracks and the Israelis have acknowledged that there are two tracks — a Palestinian-Israeli one and a Jordan-Israel one."

No final agreement has as yet been reached between the negotiators over these points and the details of the

joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation and the Israelis was over "equality."

"We (Jordanians) were equal to the Israelis because Jordan is a full sovereign state and this means that we had equality," Dr. Anani said.

To press the equality issue between the Israelis and Palestinians, the Palestinians expressed preference that they be represented by 14 members in the plenary meeting.

"The Israelis of course reject this.

But the joint position of Jordanians and Palestinians is that if that is not tenable, then only the heads of the Israeli, Jordanian and Palestinian parties would meet in lieu of plenary meetings which would include all of the three parties' members," Dr. Anani explained.

The subject of frequency of the plenary meetings, their agenda and how they should be called remain the contentious points between the joint delegation and the Israelis.

No final agreement has as yet been reached between the negotiators over these points and the details of the

"They say that meetings by the heads of the parties does not preclude the plenary meetings they are demanding," Dr. Anani said.

The Israelis continue to insist on frequent plenary meetings to press the joint nature of the Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. The Jordanians and Palestinians, on the other hand, want these meetings to be held only at the request of the three negotiating parties i.e. Israeli, Jordanian and Palestinian.

The Israelis were asking for a seven-to-seven member formula but the Palestinians were asking for a maximum of the full 14 members from each party, but certainly over half, to the bilateral negotiations.

The reasoning behind the Palestinian preference was because of the Jordanian element within their party, which is expected to be represented by two members. "Having two Jordanian members out of a Palestinian party of seven would be higher percentage than two out of 14," Dr. Anani said.

The joint delegation has proposed

(Continued on page 5)

Peace needs broader vision of coexistence, rights — Prince Hassan

Jordan calls for confidence-building Israeli measures starting with settlement freeze

By Serene Halasa
and P.V. Vivekanand

AMMAN — Israel can never hope to ensure its security under the present conditions if it believes in continued occupation of Arab territories and maintaining a massive stock of weapons of mass destruction; instead it should start implementing confidence-building measures starting with a freeze in settlements in the occupied territories as a sign of goodwill in the ongoing peace talks with Arabs, Jordan said Thursday.

A broad vision of coexistence based on the inalienable rights of people and a spirit of cooperation and recognition of and solutions to the disparities among the countries of the Middle East is the only guarantee for a lasting peace in the region, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan said.

The Crown Prince, reaffirming the Jordanian perspective of the "trans-national" nature of and approach to the issues involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict, called on all parties to the conflict to rise above dogma, prejudice and traditional hostilities and be tolerant towards all ideologies.

Prince Hassan, addressing a fund-raising gathering in Amman, said Jordan believes that a conference on security and cooperation in the Middle East could

be the forum to "eliminate the political economy of despair." The Crown Prince indicated that Jordan would like to see the multilateral phase of the ongoing Middle East peace talks assume the shape of the sought-for conference. The multilateral phase, which will tackle issues related to water, refugees, disarmament and the environment, is slated to begin in Moscow Jan. 28-29.

"Democratisation, freedom of expression, human rights and greater awareness of a reliance on the political and economic dimensions of security provide a route towards the alternative political economy of peace, security and progress," the Crown Prince said.

See page 4 for full text of the Crown Prince's prepared speech

"True peace is not merely the absence of tension; it is the presence of justice," the Crown Prince quoted the late American civil rights campaigner Martin Luther King and pointed out that although there was no major Arab-Israeli war in the last two decades the features of peace — stability, security, respect for personal and political rights — are missing in the region.

"Injustice is ... being perpetrated against the personal, national and political rights of Palestinians at the most basic levels," he said.

As a simple example, he pointed out that while Israel is exploiting the water resources of the occupied terri-



ties and Jordan, the Palestinians — the owners of the resources — account for one per cent of all water used in Israel.

Addressing the gathering of about 200 people organised by the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC), the Crown Prince also took the opportunity to resoundingly reject the Israeli notion and claim that the Palestinian people already have a homeland in Jordan.

"Jordan is, but not Palestine," he declared.

In his prepared speech and additional off-the-cuff remarks, the Crown Prince addressed American lawmakers and said Congress had to rise above the narrow interests of lobbies which support Israel's settlement programme in the occupied territories and those related to the military establishment which thrives on massive arms sales to the Middle East.

The Crown Prince referred to the Israeli refusal to deal separately with Palestinians and its insistence on negotiating with the joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation as such in bilateral talks in Washington. He reaffirmed that the joint team represented the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the Palestinian people only to the extent of circumventing Israel rejection and that the two sides will insist on separate, independent negotiations with Israel.

The Crown Prince said that the basis of Jordan's efforts has always been the will of the international community embodied in U.N. Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 which "provide the groundwork for a practicable formula for ending the conflict in our region, by calling for the exchange of territory for peace while safeguarding the security of all states in the region, including Israel."

The hollowness in the apparent Israeli belief in territorial control and military might as a guarantee for its security was proved during the Gulf war, (when long-range Iraqi missiles pounded Israeli cities), the Crown Prince said.

"There can only be one sure

(Continued on page 5)

Baker: No U.S. interference in internal Soviet affairs

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — Secretary of State James Baker said Friday the United States would not interfere in the internal domestic political turmoil now unfolding in the Soviet Union.

Addressing a White House press conference ahead of his trip to key Soviet republics, Mr. Baker said:

"We cannot and must not inject ourselves into this purely political process."

Mr. Baker said the "new Russian revolution... must come from within and not from outside."

Mr. Baker, at a news conference after meeting with President George Bush, said the president spoke by telephone on Friday with Russian President Boris Yeltsin who gave him a "full update" on efforts to form a new Commonwealth to replace the Soviet Union.

"Events are moving quickly and dramatic decisions are being made as the republics sort out relations among themselves" and seek to form a common entity for national policy," Mr. Baker said.

Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev said Friday he had no intention of stepping down immediately and would remain in power at least until next week's visit by Mr. Baker.

"He was asked whether he would remain until Monday for the secretary of state's visit and he said there was no doubt about that," spokesman Alexander Likhto said of a meeting Mr. Gorbachev held with U.S. journalists.

Denying suggestions that

"As for later, he said this was a matter of the constitutional process which will take some time. He mentioned no date for any possible resignation," Mr. Likhto said by telephone from his Kremlin office.

Mr. Baker said he would travel to five cities in the Soviet republics for talks that would focus on the need for nuclear weapons control, humanitarian concerns and other issues.

"We cannot and must not inject ourselves into this purely political process and, as the president made clear at the cabinet meeting, we will not so inject ourselves," Mr. Baker said.

He said U.S. officials "have not seen any changes in command and control that alarm us," but he added: "We do have a national security interest in seeing that these transformations take place in a manner that does not increase the risk from nuclear standpoint."

Asked whether he views Mr. Gorbachev as "gone," Mr. Baker referred the questioner to Mr. Bush's statement earlier in the day that it was not "helpful" to be discussing the personalities of those involved in the power struggle in the old Soviet Union.

Mr. Baker stressed his determination to favour democratic-minded regions in his diplomacy, but the United States would not deny humanitarian assistance to other regions in the splintering nation.

The secretary of state said he would meet with Mr. Gorbachev. See related story on page 8.

Honecker sparks rows in Chile and Soviet Union

BERLIN (R) — Fugitive former East German leader Erich Honecker, ordered to leave Moscow by midnight, sparked political battles in Chile and the Soviet Union on Friday as he fought extradition to face manslaughter charges in Germany.

Mr. Baker said he would travel to Chile to meet with the Chilean mission left him ensnared in the protracted power struggle between Russian President Boris Yeltsin and the waning Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev.

What may be Mr. Honecker's last stand also strained Mr. Aylwin's centre-left coalition in Santiago, where the Socialist Party wants to grant him entry while the president is loath to anger German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, a fellow Christian Democrat.

Russian Interior Minister Andrei Dunayev has said the issue could be resolved by midnight on Friday, the deadline for his departure from Moscow.

Captured in the middle, Bonn called on both Santiago and Moscow to ensure that Mr. Honecker, who fled to the Soviet Union last March to escape trial here, is returned to Germany.

Mr. Baker stressed his determination to favour democratic-minded regions in his diplomacy, but the United States would not deny humanitarian assistance to other regions in the splintering nation.

"I assume Mr. Honecker's stay in the Chilean embassy will not be long," German Justice Minister Klaus Kinkel said.

Mr. Honecker, whose hardline rule from 1971 to 1989 prompted many East Germans to occupy embassies to win permission to travel West, slipped into San-

siego's embassy in Moscow on Wednesday and asked to join his daughter in Chile.

His wife Margot visited the daughter, who is married to a Chilean communist, last October.

Mr. Honecker's dash to the Chilean mission left him ensnared in the protracted power struggle between Russian President Boris Yeltsin and the waning Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev.

Half-way around the world, left-wing members of Chile's government pressed President Patricio Aylwin to grant asylum to the veteran communist as thanks for taking in refugees from the military dictatorship of the 1970s and 1980s.

But Santiago was waiting until midnight on Friday, the deadline for his departure from Moscow.

Mr. Aylwin, who as foreign minister in the leftist government of President Salvador Allende helped establish diplomatic ties with East Berlin, was refused entry to West Germany before he turned to the communist states.

Germany expects Honecker soon, page 8

U.S. papers see Mideast sides trying to break impasse

Special from Washington

EVENTS OTHER than the Middle East peace negotiations continued to dominate news reports in the U.S. media Friday as American newspapers paid more attention to the talks than television and radio.

Friday's newspapers noted progress in Thursday's efforts to resolve the deadlock over how to negotiate separate Jordanian and Palestinian agendas, with all sides saying they were "edging closer" to breaking the impasse. The Washington Times quoted chief Palestinian negotiator Haidar Abdul Shafi as saying, "I think, it's my feeling, that we are approaching an agreement and that probably we'll proceed into substance very soon." The New York Times reported yesterday's events in the Silwan neighbourhood of Jerusalem, where Israeli settlers occupied Arab homes.

John Goshko of the Washington Post reported that the Israeli, Palestinian and Jordanian delegations had all agreed on a two-track approach "whose practical effects would have Israel discuss issues involving Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip with the Palestinian members of the joint delegation." According to Goshko's sources, the compromise formula arrived at on Thursday calls for the Palestinians to drop their insistence on starting the talks in separate rooms, while the Israelis would agree to an early start on the two-track approach. This

German newspapers reported Mr. Almeida, who as foreign minister in the leftist government of President Salvador Allende helped establish diplomatic ties with East Berlin, was refused entry to West Germany before he turned to the communist states.

Germany expects Honecker soon, page 8

(Continued on page 5)

Curfew causes severe hardships in West Bank

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Food and fuel shortages were reported in the occupied West Bank towns of Ramallah and Al Birsh because of a nearly two-week army curfew imposed after the death of a Jewish settler, human rights groups said Friday.

A coordinating committee for the groups said in a statement that "the residents are suffering food shortages and a lack of income" because they are not allowed to go to their jobs.

It said the curfew was "a collective penalty" and urged that it be lifted immediately.

Under a curfew, residents are confined to their homes 24 hours a day. All vehicles, including delivery trucks, are barred from the streets.

The army said the curfew was imposed on the towns in the West Bank to facilitate searches for suspects in the death of Jewish settler Zvi Klein, 45, who was fatally shot in the head Dec. 1 as he drove near Al Birsh.

An army spokesman said he could not say when the restrictions would be removed.

But Joshua Schonman, legal director of the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, said his group had been assured that the army would lift the curfew Sunday "if nothing else happens."

He said that until the curfew was lifted, the civil rights group would keep active a suit filed earlier this week "challenging this curfew as excessive."

The adjacent towns of Ramallah and Al Birsh, about 10 kilometres north of Jerusalem,

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4. Has a pleasant and dynamic personality.
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Husseini: Jerusalem now at the top of Palestinian agenda

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — The Palestinians will raise the explosive issue of Jerusalem as the first item at Washington peace talks because of intensified Jewish settlement in the city's Arab districts, a Palestinian leader warned Friday.

The Americans had pressured the Palestinians to save debate over Jerusalem, the most sensitive issue of the Arab-Israeli conflict, until a later stage of the talks, years down the road.

"In the beginning, we accepted to deal with Jerusalem in a second phase of negotiations, but now it is our first priority," Faisal Husseini, an adviser to Palestinian peace negotiators, said Friday.

Raising Jerusalem now would further complicate the Washington talks since Israel insists the city's future cannot be discussed until much later.

Mr. Husseini spent the night with two Palestinian families in the Arab district of Silwan, where a day earlier 13 Jewish families moved into six homes after claiming they acquired control legally.

The settlers, who tried to take over homes in the district last October but were ousted by police, made their move this time under police protection after winning the government's backing and a ruling that their rental of the homes was legal.

But Arab residents of the district have brought suit claiming

the settlers move into two of the houses was illegal. Liberal politicians criticised the settlers' move and about 20 Israeli peace activists demonstrated Friday against the settlers.

The Israeli newspaper Haaretz reported Friday that other Jewish settler groups have been working secretly for the past year to acquire property in other Arab districts of Jerusalem.

Jerusalem's Israeli mayor, Ted Kollek, warned that the settlers' actions threatened the peace talks and further raised tensions in the city.

He blamed the government which he said "seems to be following the extremists, people with a fanatically shortsighted understanding of Jerusalem's interests."

"Does anyone seriously think that there will not always be Muslims and Christians in Jerusalem? That we can ignore their rights and expect the world to respect ours?" he said Friday.

Mr. Kollek said, however, that he was helpless against the settlers. "Unfortunately, as mayor, I have no means to fight, other than my powers of persuasion," he said.

On Friday, a municipal court issued a temporary order telling the settlers to leave one house involved in the Arabs' suit but allowing them to remain in the other until a final decision on the case is made in three days.

On Thursday, the settlers had ignored a judges' instruction to leave both dwellings, and police did not move to evict them. Police spokesman Shmuel Ben-Ruby said police did not act because they had no specific order.

When the settlers first entered the Silwan homes on Oct. 9, police evicted the intruders on their own as a security threat. Silwan is a hotbed of the four-year Palestinian uprising, and police feared violent clashes.

But last Sunday, the right-wing cabinet of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir approved the settlers' move into the area — provided they got legal backing — and ordered police to protect them.

Dan Avi-Isaac, an attorney for the settlers, said most of the apartments were rented to the settlers by government agencies. For example, he said, one-third are "absentee property" taken over by the "occupation power" after Arab owners fled in the 1948 Middle East war.

On Friday, dozens of riot police were deployed to guard the Jewish settlers.

Mr. Husseini said the takeover of the Silwan home made it more difficult to sell the idea of the peace talks to sceptical Palestinians.

"Our people have their own serious doubts about the credibility of the peace talks," he said.

'Maxwell died from mix of heart attack and drowning'

SANTA CRUZ DE TENERIFE, Spain (Agencies) — British media tycoon Robert Maxwell probably died of a heart attack although drowning could not be ruled out as an associated factor, according to a final forensic report released Friday.

Judge Isabel Oliva of the Granadilla district court, who issued the report, said she had decided to close the case after concluding that Mr. Maxwell's death was most probably accidental.

The family or a higher provincial court has 10 days to appeal, Judge Oliva said.

"I've closed the case," she said. Asked if she had found evidence of criminal activity, she answered: "No."

Earlier, court spokesman Jose Luis Santos had said Judge Oliva had issued a formal ruling to shelve the case without charges.

"She believes she has nothing more to do," Mr. Santos said. "From her point of view, there are no known individuals implicated."

The judge based her decision on police investigations, her questioning of the crew and Mr. Maxwell's widow, and an autopsy report that concluded Mr. Maxwell died due to a coronary crisis.

Initial forensic findings indicated that Mr. Maxwell, 68, died of a heart attack but speculation has been rife he might have committed suicide or been killed as his media empire crumbled.

The report said he died within an hour either side of 0600 GMT on Nov. 5.

The effects of water on the body were consistent with the time between his death and the time the body was recovered from the sea (about 1840 GMT).

"No external signs of violence were found, nor specifically any punctures, injuries indicating blockage of respiratory orifices,

or trauma which would imply loss of consciousness or a definitive mortal action."

"Evidence of death caused by a toxic agent was not confirmed by analysis conducted so far," the report said.

The widow of Mr. Maxwell is happy with the findings of the autopsy and with the judge's recommendation the case be closed, the family's lawyer said.

"I have just spoken to Mrs. Maxwell and she was reassured by the result," Julio Hernandez Claverie told Reuters Thursday.

Mr. Hernandez Claverie declined to speculate on how the judge's decision would affect the family's insurance companies' payoffs, estimated at \$20 million (\$36 million).

"It will be up to the (insurance companies') lawyers to see whether they accept the decision," he said.

Speculation Mr. Maxwell killed himself to avoid the humiliation of seeing his publishing empire collapse has been mounting since he died. His empire has since collapsed under debts of \$3 billion.

In Britain, fraud squad detectives are investigating suspicions that as creditors turned up the heat in the months before Mr. Maxwell's death, the Czech-born mogul desperately siphoned off pension fund assets worth around \$600 million.

Mr. Hernandez Claverie said the family had no immediate plans to challenge the judge's ruling, but stressed they would only decide after careful reading of the autopsy report and the judge's decision, more than 50 pages in total.

"There are many medical concepts which I don't understand very well. It's very long. It will take me several days," he said.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Vassiliou gives guarantees for Turks

CANBERRA (AP) — Greek Cypriot President George Vassiliou

Friday

advocated establishing a unified federal state in which Greek and Turkish Cypriots would be protected by having their own police forces, mayors and legal systems. Vassiliou, who is on a week-long official visit to Australia, met Prime Minister Bob Hawke on Thursday and received a pledge for continued Australian support for U.N. efforts to reunify the island. As Turkish Cypriots demonstrated outside, Mr. Vassiliou told the National Press club Friday that the United Nations and the world community should work to force Turkey to withdraw its occupation forces from northern Cyprus.

Army to cede power in Mauritania by end of 1992

NOUAKCHOTT (R) — Mauritania's President Maouya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya has said his military government will cede power to elected civilians by the end of 1992, apparently delaying the handover by several months. Thursday's announcement on state radio made no reference to a previous timetable under which the army would give up power in the first half of next year. The country's eight opposition parties recently asked the government to delay presidential elections, scheduled for Jan. 24, by three or four months to give them more time to prepare. Political analysts said Colonel Ould Taya's announcement could be a response to their request, hinting at a possible postponement. Col. Ould Taya is one of two candidates who have so far said they will run for president.

Relatives of jailed dissidents protest in Iran

NICOSIA (R) — Iranian police arrested several relatives of political dissidents protesting outside offices of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Tehran on Thursday, an Iraq-based opposition group said. The protesters accused authorities of sending political prisoners to secret prisons in an effort to hide them from ICRC inspection, the Mujahedeen-e-Khalq group, said in a statement from London. Iran, accused by the West of human rights violations, agreed last month to let the ICRC visit prisons and interview inmates. Tehran denies detaining people for their political beliefs. The Mujahedeen said police tried to stop protesters from reaching the ICRC office and detained a "large number" of them.

Lockleber victim's father meets with Qadhafi

LONDON (R) — The father of a victim of the 1988 bombing of a Pan Am jet said on Thursday he had a secret meeting with Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi and was given a sealed envelop for Scotland's top law officer. Jim Swire, whose daughter was killed in the explosion over the Scottish town of Lockerbie, said he had handed the envelope to Scotland's lord advocate Wednesday. "I think I know what it contains but I am not saying," Mr. Swire said.



Kurds sceptical of Saudi-backed Iraqi exile 'government'

ERBIL, Iraq (R) — Kurdish rebels say Saudi Arabia has proposed that they join with other Iraqi opposition groups in forming a provisional government in exile with the aim of toppling President Saddam Hussein.

But the Kurds add they are sceptical of the plan, under which a Riyadh-based provisional government would request United Nations recognition as the legitimate government of Iraq.

"We are familiar with the Saudi plan. Apart from money, I am not sure what the Saudis have to offer. They have no political ideas," Hoshyar Zebari, adviser to Massoud Barzani who is one of two major Kurdish resistance leaders, told Reuters Friday.

He and other Kurdish sources in northern Iraq said the Saudis were trying to organise a meeting of Iraqi opposition groups to be held in Riyadh early next year.

They said the governments of Egypt, Iran and Syria were cooperating with Saudi Arabia in trying implement the plan.

More than 60 Iraqi opposition groups seek President Saddam's fall but ethnic, religious and ideological differences divide them.

Nationalist Kurds, Sunni Baathists, Shiite fundamentalists and Christian communists jostle for position. Kurds say forming a provisional government incorporating all groups is daunting.

Washington, wary of Iraqi opposition groups, is said to be seeking a way to get topple President Saddam without direct involvement.

The New York Times reported earlier this week that the Bush administration was reviewing military operations for a U.S. response in the event of a coup in Iraq.

President George Bush, after a reelection bid next year, expects political foes to point to President Saddam's continued rule as proof the Gulf war and U.S.-instigated United Nations blockade had failed to achieve a main goal.

Mr. Zebari said he believed the Saudis hoped to replace President Saddam and his leadership with another Sunni-led government that would not be influenced by Syrian nationalists or Iranian fundamentalists.

"They want ... a palace coup really. They fear change from the periphery, from the Kurds or the Shiites," he said.

Washington, wary of Iraqi

Kurds strongly prefer a provisional government based in northern Iraq, saying it would be more likely to gain independence and international legitimacy.

Kurdish sources say the Saudi intelligence chief visited Washington in September to enlist U.S. support for the scheme.

There has been no official word from Saudi Arabia regarding any such proposal.

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Mr. Zebari, leader of the guerrilla backed Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), has been negotiating with Baghdad for months to secure autonomy for Kurdistan within the framework of a sovereign Iraqi state.

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Rescue Police .. 192, 621111, 637777

Foreign minister returns from Dakar

AMMAN (Petra) — Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber and the Jordanian delegation accompanying him Thursday returned home after attending the Organisation of Islamic Conference's meetings which concluded in the Senegalese capital of Dakar Wednesday.

In an arrival statement, Dr. Abu Jaber said the Dakar summit reaffirmed the Islamic countries' support for the Arab rights and the constructive Arab position towards the peace process. He added that the summit renewed solidarity with the Palestinian people and voiced support for them in their endeavours to their legitimate rights.

The delegations taking part in the meetings expressed satisfaction with the peaceful efforts and delineated the elements for achieving a just, comprehensive and durable solution to the Middle East problem, Dr. Abu Jaber said, adding that Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories, including the occupied Jordanian territory, and ensuring the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, were pre-

requisites for establishing a just and durable peace in the region.

He pointed out that His Majesty King Hussein's participation in the summit, was received with appreciation and satisfaction by the delegations taking part in the conference.

King Hussein's speech before the summit was well received and enjoyed the full support of participating delegations because of the specific ideas the King presented to ensure an Islamic renaissance, capable of lifting the Arab Nation out of the current deteriorating situation, Dr. Abu Jaber said.

The foreign minister pointed out that the King also emphasised the need for drawing up a future plan, including an Islamic perspective for remedying the problems facing Islamic countries.

Dr. Abu Jaber noted that the Jordanian delegation called on the conference to adopt a firm stand towards the repeated Israeli aggressions and attacks on the holy shrine in Jerusalem, following the recent attack on the Al Aqsa Mosque.

Ulama decry Israeli attack on Al Aqsa Mosque, urge U.S. to stop atrocities

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan has formally asked the U.S. to help stop Israeli atrocities in the occupied Arab territories. The call was made by Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Minister Izzeddin Al Khatib to U.S. ambassador to Jordan, Roger Harrison, in a meeting Thursday.

Sheikh Khatib affirmed that the Israeli occupation authorities' aggressions on Arabs and Islamic holy places were provocative acts that might lead to clashes in Al Aqsa Mosque and were considered an interference in the religious affairs of the Muslim population of the territories.

The Israeli act, the minister added, was a flagrant challenge for the feelings of millions of Muslims around the world, particularly the Palestinian people.

Sheikh Khatib called on the American government to pressure Israel to stop such aggressions.

In a related development Chief Islamic Judge Mohammad Mheilan issued a statement Thursday condemning the Israeli aggression.

Sheikh Mheilan appealed to the Arab World, the Islamic world and all international organisations to bring to an end such atrocities and called on them to

take rapid measures that would stop such acts by the occupation forces.

"With this ugly deed, Israel has added another crime to its daily crimes of killing innocent children and women in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, destroying houses, expropriating properties, uprooting trees and imprisoning men and women under fabricated charges," the statement said.

The Islamic Committee and the Awqaf and the Islamic Affairs Council in Jerusalem held a meeting Wednesday and demanded that Arab and Muslim states take action to reverse the effects of this statement.

The Jordanian government has also asked Jordan's permanent representative at the United Nations to submit a memorandum on the issue to the Security Council and the general secretariat of the U.N..

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan has strongly condemned a resolution taken by the Islamic summit conference in Dakar, Senegal calling for the continued imposition of international sanctions on Iraq.

A statement issued by the Lower House of Parliament said such a call was unjust and in contradiction to all norms and international principles and was directed against values of human rights and dignity.

"We are dismayed at the resolution calling for continued sanctions on the Iraqi people and we are urging Islamic nations to rescind such a resolution as history can never condone such crimes committed against a Muslim country by Muslims," said the statement issued on Thursday.

"Such a resolution runs against all norms, international principles and the general secretariat of the Arab Union and the general secretariat of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) which organised the Dakar meeting.

Meanwhile, the Lower House of Parliament held a meeting Thursday, in the presence of Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and cabinet members, during which two deputy speakers and two assistants to the speaker, Mr. Ahmad Al Lawzi were elected.

The Upper House also elected heads of Islamic countries not to serve as tools in the hands of the camp, led by the United States, that is hostile against the Arab and Islamic countries.

The House sent copies of the statement to the Arab Parliament.

Lower House lashes out at Dakar resolution to continue sanctions on Iraq

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Panel enlightens Jordanians on Arab lobbies overseas

By Nur Sati
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Throughout the years, Arab lobbies in the United States and other areas have become the umbilical cord of the Arab World in keeping the legitimate interests of their motherland alive.

"We are working towards a better foreign policy in the United States and working towards the interests of the Middle East," Albert Mukheimer, president of the U.S.-based American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) said in a panel discussion Wednesday evening.

The focus of the panel discussion, entitled "search for peace and justice," was mainly to enlighten the Jordanian public on the achievements of Arab lobbies abroad. "We also need the people's support in the Arab countries and for them to know that they are not alone," Mr. Mukheimer told Radio Jordan.

The four speakers at the panel were Dr. Hassan Badran and Dr. Mahmoud Al Taher, members of the Asian Pacific basin as well as its adjacent and neighbouring countries.

Arabs, who total 300,000 out of the 17 million Australian population, number higher in Australia than in the United States, he said. Here too "the Israeli lobby is extremely powerful and has an impact in stereotyping Arabs and Islam," Mr. Zananir, who is also an architect said. "There is a lot of discrimination," he went on to say.

"If the government is the main educator of public opinion, then people are influenced by their governments and base their stances on the official government line," he said, adding that Arab organisations are looking into the process of transcending regionalism and sectarianism and are fighting discrimination in the community.

CAA was formed on Aug. 10, 1990 during the Gulf crisis.

"We are trying to change political resolutions that have affected the Arab community which were looked upon as second class citizens," Mr. Zananir said.

Throughout the 100 years of history in the Labour Party, no parliament member voted against the government without getting kicked out, he said. "Now, eight people from the Labour Party voted against the government yet we were able to afford them enough protection from getting kicked out."

Representative of the CAA, Mr. Zananir, focused on the important role the Arab community, Australians began to realise that Arabs were a part of Australia and had the right to oppose government policies.

Dr. Badran spoke about the activities of the JPPNW, which was formed by a group of international doctors in 1980, to educate the public on the consequences of nuclear war. During the Gulf war the JPPNW campaigned vigorously in Jordan and abroad.

Dr. Taher told the audience: "Iraqi and Palestinian children in Ottawa, Canada, have met the foreign affairs deputies and the Canadian government to demand the unfreezing of Iraq's assets."

His Majesty King Hussein met at the Royal Court with Mr. Mukheimer, Mr. Rahhal and former Senator member James Abu Rizek. The King spoke about the peace process and Jordan's view and he (King) was briefed on the groups' activities and programmes.

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QAF runs a great number of centres, in rural and urban districts, designed to raise the standard of Jordanian families and help women in rural areas to contribute to the development of their community.

QAF, which was founded to promote, consolidate and organise national capabilities and resources in support of social development and a higher life quality.

On display are ceramic works,

QAF displays talents

AMMAN (J.T.) — The first ever exhibition of products by the Queen Alia Social Welfare Fund (QAF) is now being held at the Jordan Inter Continental Hotel in Amman.

The five-day exhibition which displays products by QAF's various centres was Thursday opened formally by Her Royal Highness Princess Basma, chairperson of QAF's board of trustees.

On display are ceramic works,

handwoven carpets and knit wear.

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Municipality of Greater Amman

Amman Transport and Municipal Development Project

(Loan No. 2334 - JO)

Road Maintenance Equipment and Instruments Tender IFB 1/91

The Municipality of Greater Amman intends to apply part of the proceeds of the above mentioned loan for the new issue of road maintenance equipment and instruments tender which includes the following: loaders, pneumatic rollers, tractors, pickup trucks, portable spray bar, portable chip spread, TRRL skid resistance pendulum, sandpatch, truck mounted crane, mini finisher and traffic cones.

Tender documents will be available as of December 11, 1991 for a non-refundable fee of (JD 160) one hundred sixty JD for each set from:

Municipality of Greater Amman
Tenders Department
P.O.Box 132 Amman - Jordan

Tlx: 21969 AMCITY JO Fax: 649420

Closing date for accepting the bids is 10:00 hours January 27, 1992, at the same address mentioned above.

A bank guarantee as a bid bond is a must for accepting the bids amounting to (5%) of the total bid value and all bidders must comply fully with page (39) of the tenders documents in order for their bids to be accepted.

All bids will be opened publicly on the same closing date at 12:00 hours.

Choir of YWCA ushers Christmas

By Jean-Claude Elias
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Faithful to their annual Christmas "rendez-vous" with all lovers of vocal music, the Young Woman Christian Association (YWCA) choir has started a series of four concerts, virtually all sold out several days in advance, at Nabil Mashini theatre (ex Noujoum, ex Opera). Performances started Dec. 13 and would continue at 8:00 pm today and tomorrow.

The statement called on countries of the region to give due protection to the land from pollution, to conduct studies and seminars in pollution-prevention matters and to offer guidance to farmers on the proper use of chemical materials like pesticides and fertilizers with a view to safeguarding the land and the environment in general.

It also said that special emphasis should be made on the production

of cereals and animal feed which are essential components in the plans and programmes for ensuring food security.

Other recommendations included calls for protecting pasture lands, introducing measures to ensure food security in the Arab World.

The theme of the meeting was the role of farmers cooperatives in promoting food production in the Arab World and the experience of the Jordan Cooperative Organisation was among those topics discussed at the meeting.

A statement at the end of the conference urged the participating countries to pave the way for more investments in agriculture to use modern technology for the sake of ensuring food security and to develop the rural regions of the Arab World.

The statement recommended that Arab agricultural cooperatives be allowed to boost their operations as they form a very essential element in promoting production, and to give special vocational training to personnel involved in the work of agricultural extension services.

The statement called on countries of the region to give due protection to the land from pollution, to conduct studies and seminars in pollution-prevention matters and to offer guidance to farmers on the proper use of chemical materials like pesticides and fertilizers with a view to safeguarding the land and the environment in general.

The delegates, he said, also recommended closer cooperation among the Near Eastern nations in matters related to veterinary medicine, laboratory work related to vaccines and combating animal diseases.

and genuine spirit are beyond compare, as well as the work of soloists Randa Awwad, Samia Ghannoun and Leonardo Giulang, the YWCA choir has this year added Ramzi Oubain on violin and Fares Islamini on clarinet who will perform on Mozart and finally a full cantate by John Peterson.

While all members have put all their talent and faith in preparing the much awaited series of concerts, it is worth mentioning the special efforts of conductor Karim Bawab whose dedication

to the changes, a press conference scheduled for Saturday by RJ executive president to mark RJ's 28th anniversary has been cancelled, according to the sources.

They said the annual marketing and sales conference for RJ area managers which was supposed to open Monday, Dec. 16, has been postponed until further notice.

The two-day meeting was set to group area officers from 42 regions of RJ's commercial performance and operations in 1991 and discuss operational plans for the coming year.

RJ's deputy directors were also to present the air carrier's policies about future operations, finance and administration at the meeting.

RJ's 1991 operations witnessed the reopening of the Amman-Beirut route and the starting of Amman-Colombo and Amman-Toronto new routes.

Municipality of Greater Amman

Amman Transport and Municipal Development Project

(Loan No. 2334 - JO)

Reissue of Road Maintenance Equipment Tender IFB 2/90

The Municipality of Greater Amman intends to apply part of the proceeds of the above mentioned loan for the reissue of road maintenance equipment tender which includes the following: water tanks, dump trucks small & large, vibratory rollers, road milling machine, fuel tank, concrete vibrators, mini loaders, cutting machines, mobile concrete mixer, backhoe loader, heater and sprayer, crack filling machine, melter pourer, road marking machine, bitumen distributor & tanker.

Tender documents will be available as of December 11, 1991 for a non-refundable fee of (JD 160) one hundred sixty JD for each set from:

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Companies that participated in above mentioned tender can obtain the tender documents at no fee.

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آخر موعد لتقديم العروض هو الساعة العاشرة من صباح يوم الاثنين

الموافق ٢٧/١/١٩٩٢ مارق بقيمة قدره ٥٪ من قيمة العرض معجب

كفلة بكتبة وكل عرض غير مرافق بالكتاب المطلوب يرفض ولا ينظر اليه.

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Jordan Times

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Chairman of the Board of Directors:
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Editor-in-Chief:

GEORGE S. HAWATMEH

Editorial and advertising offices:

Jordan Press Foundation,

University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

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Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO

Faximile: 661242

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Time to reflect

THIS WEEKEND in Washington should serve in addition to being a time for rest as a time for reflection as well.

Arabs, Israelis and Americans, involved in the search for peace in this troubled region, should not let the vision of peace escape their sight when they weigh with care and alarm the prospects of peace or no peace in this part of the world. While Arabs should recall in their minds the fears of Israel, the Israelis should in turn dwell in their thoughts on Palestinian aspirations and rights. And the Americans should think in historical perception of their moral role as the dominant power in the world.

For peace to be achieved, those women and men in Washington should do their utmost to ensure that ultimately Israeli fears will be eradicated and Arab-Palestinian rights restored. Even at this very early stage of the negotiations both Arabs and Israelis could, by continuing to talk, do a great deal for removing mistrust between them and for replacing that with confidence.

Keeping in mind at all times what the alternative for peace will be, the negotiating sides in Washington should do all they could to ensure that the talks will proceed on solid and moral grounds. While it is regarded as naive to talk about morality in politics, this particular conflict in the Middle East requires a great deal of moral courage to untangle its complexity. Nowhere is a one land being claimed by two people and nowhere is the U.S. so involved.

The news coming from Washington late Friday were encouraging. Whatever shape of agreement the Jordanian, Palestinian and Israeli negotiators reach is for sure better than no agreement. An agreement on this issue paves the road for the next round and the one after. It is encouraging also to note that the Americans, although assuming a low key profile, are actively involved in the two sides quest for compromise. Although the U.S. administration is strained by its domestic agenda, the United States itself has a moral responsibility towards a world that it helped shape and a region — the Middle East — in which it has its most important interest. A region so important to American interests that the U.S. went into war against one of its regional powers.

Those negotiators in Washington must not only look at their task from the narrow framework of real politics but also in a historical perspective. Whatever they achieve or fail to achieve in Washington these days will help determine which path the peoples of the region will take, peace or war.

Those negotiators, therefore, should make their first agreement on continuing the talks no matter what obstacles they might face. They should work hard, together with their American interlocutors, to ensure that the talks will continue until peace is attained. This last opportunity must not be missed.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

THE ARAB heads of state have missed a golden chance of meeting together and end their difference by failing to show up at the Islamic summit conference in Senegal, said Al Ra'i Arabic daily. The summit should have been a starting point for the heads of the Arab nation to launch joint action and to forget about their side differences for the sake of giving all their attention to achieve the aspirations of their nation, the paper said. King Hussein's presence among the Muslim leaders in Dakar and his active participation in the summit was a cause of pride for Arabs and Muslims; but the Muslims of Africa were disappointed to see that the Arabs have shunned the summit and missed a good chance for concerting the Islamic countries' actions and discussing issues of concern to their countries, said the paper. The Africans were hoping that such a meeting would lay the foundation for a true and firm cooperation and unity among Muslim brothers, achievements which are opposed by the Western countries, the enemies of Islam and the Arabs, stressed the paper. It said that the Western countries are determined to impose the so-called new world order which entails total disregard to Muslims' interests and disrespect of the Arab and Islamic culture. The paper said that the Americans and the Western countries are doing all they can to keep the Arabs and Muslims divided and in disarray; it is regrettable to see the Arab and Muslim countries helping them to do that and enabling them to maintain a way of genocide on the Iraqi people.

A COLUMNIST in Al Ra'i Arabic daily criticised the European Community countries whose leaders discussed the Middle East among other world issues at their summit in Holland. Mohammad Kharoub said that the final statement issued by the European Community leaders was a retreat from Europe's earlier stance and did not support the just Arab cause. The statement, which was apparently carefully worded to please the Americans and to avoid angering the Israelis, linked a half of Israeli settlements on Arab lands to Arab countries' ending their boycott of Israel, the writer said. He said that the Europeans were clearly influenced and pressured by the United States which does not want Europe to have a leading role in the peace making process. The writer said it is natural for Europe to play a more active role in this process in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union which is supposed to be co-sponsoring the peace negotiations. The writer urged the Arab countries involved in the negotiations to help the Europeans take a more active role in ending their conflict with Israel and in ensuring the restoration of Arab rights and usurped Arab lands.

Following is the full text of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan's speech at the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee Conference on Thursday.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

"True peace is not merely the absence of tension; it is the presence of justice." These are the words of a man who lived — and died — for peace, for the end of discrimination and for the beginning of an age of tolerance, co-operation and understanding between peoples and nations. Although he died nearly a quarter of a century ago, his words remain singularly relevant in 1991, and I believe them especially apt today. For your deliberations at this conference — indeed, all of your endeavours — surely owe a great debt to the spirit and wisdom of Dr. Martin Luther King. I would like to take this opportunity to honour the memory of one who did so much to promote the ideals of non-violence, peace and true justice, and who showed how those ideals might one day become realities.

Distinguished delegates,

"Dr. King's dictum about the nature of peace is nowhere more applicable than in the Middle East. For almost two decades now, there have been no major wars between the Arab states and Israel. Yet neither has there been peace. In the occupied territories, all the features that one would expect to be present in a state of peace — stability, security, respect for personal and political rights — have been markedly absent. As the intifada goes into its fifth year, distribution of resources continues to be characterized by blatant injustice. This is, of course, to say nothing of the total blanket disregard of legitimate and basic human rights, such as the right to self-determination.

There is no war, but there is no peace, by any criteria. Applying Dr. King's analysis, not only is justice absent, but tension is ever-present. How then may we define this situation? It is a situation that must end, one that cannot be sustained indefinitely: that much we may safely say. But as ever, the difficult questions concern not the situation to be transformed, but the nature of its replacement.

The international peace conference held in Madrid on Oct. 30, 1991 marked a watershed in the history of our troubled region, and pointed the way towards such a replace. After decades of false dawns, futile initiatives, representatives of all parties concerned with the conflict gathered together, in the hope of laying the groundwork for a long-term and sustainable resolution to the conflict. It is the hope of Jordan that all parties to the process will continue down the long and difficult path to peace in the spirit of open exchange and communication. The fact that we have reached this stage at all owes much to that spirit, and we believe it alone to be capable of fulfilling our mutual desire for peace, security and mutual enrichment.

It has always been Jordan's aim to help bring about a peaceful and equitable resolution to the Palestine question and the concomitant Arab-Israeli conflict. We believe that the former lies at the heart of the latter, and that progress towards peace hinges on a comprehensive resolution of that question. It must be pointed out here that when we speak of resolving the Palestine question, we are employing

a term that denotes the provision of both material and non-material human needs associated with the development, identity and autonomy of the individual and of groups with which the individual identifies.

Among the central objectives of any state purporting to act in the interests of those living under its regime are the provision of food, basic health, and purpose for all. These objectives are so fundamental to the human condition that they may be classed as minimum requirements which people may legitimately expect of states. The facts on the ground indicate that Palestinians in the occupied territories are discriminated against on a daily basis in respect of these requirements, in flagrant violation of international law. Injustice is thus being perpetrated against the personal, national and political rights of Palestinians at the most basic levels.

With respect to the first of these requirements, I would draw your attention to a few statistics on water in the occupied territories. Since 1967, Palestinians have been prevented from drilling artesian wells for irrigation purposes. As a result, the proportion of Palestinian farmland under irrigation has declined from 27 per cent to only 4 per cent. Some 80 per cent of water from the mountain aquifers, underground reserves beneath the hills of the West Bank, is taken by Israeli West Bank villages account for about one per cent of all the water used in Israel. The Israeli allocation of water resources, naturally scarce in the first place, is discrimination of the most basic kind.

But although the statistics are in themselves cause for grave concern, it is the absence of the third requirement — purpose — that is most worrying. Palestinians in the occupied territories are not provided with any tools of participation, are not accorded the respect necessary to form and manifest their collective will. Purpose requires participation. Participation provides people with an opportunity to manage their own affairs, and makes their identity an object of the state's respect. The collapse of the political systems of Eastern Europe that heralded this decade graphically demonstrated that the power of human needs of identity and autonomy — of participation — is far greater than military power. In the case of Israel, its failure to supply its Palestinian population with adequate supplies of water is therefore but a symptom — though an extremely troubling one — of its failure to provide purpose and participation, which would require involving or consulting that population at the most human level of resource allocation.

It was therefore heartening to note President Bush's call, in his congressional address of March 6, 1991, for the legitimate political rights of the Palestinians in their own homeland, to be a major item for the agenda of the peace conference. At last, the Palestinian national struggle for identity has been rewarded. It has taken decades, but Palestinians are now the masters of their own destiny. In the interests of reaching a resolution to this conflict, which underpins all regional confrontations, Jordan has always demonstrated flexibility as to the modalities and form of peace talks. We welcomed the inclusion of the Palestinians, and willingly provided an umbrella for their participation in the joint delegation. At Madrid, all parties indicated both their willingness to continue negotiations, and their commitment to the ultimate objective: a just and lasting peace for all. As events unfold in Washington, as we make every effort to facilitate

the goal of peace, we trust that this history will vindicate our endeavours. But the task is likely to be as difficult as it will be long, and if we are to attain that elusive objective, certain factors must be borne in mind.

From the co-sponsors of the talks, skillful mediation will be required; and sensitive, pragmatic use of the influence available to them will be needed to bridge the gulf that separates the parties on fundamental issues of substance. Questions must now be raised about the co-sponsorship of the Soviet Union, in the wake of the declarations of Russia, the Ukraine and Byelorussia of their Commonwealth of Slavic states. It is our hope that the impetus from Moscow as well as Washington can be sustained, in whatever form. There are issues to be discussed that will require balanced mediation, and perhaps given this, more than one mediator will be required. As always, however, it is impossible to predict the outcome of events in the Soviet Union. The pace of international change seems to have accelerated dramatically in the last three years. We can but hope that among the dividends of this rapid transformation will be even greater impetus for peace in our region, the kind of true peace that Dr. King spoke of and worked towards.

Israel, for its part, must accept the cardinal principle of international law that the acquisition of territory by war is inadmissible. Jordan, working within the framework of the U.N. Charter and seeking always to uphold the provisions of international law, has attempted to lay the foundations for many peace initiatives. The basis of our efforts has always been the will of the international community, embodied in U.N. Security Council resolutions 224 and 338. They provide the groundwork for a practicable formula for ending the conflict in our region, by calling for the exchange of territory for peace while safeguarding the security of all states in the region, including Israel. I would like to mention here the "security dilemma," a concept of recent political science. It relates to a situation in which two or more states are locked in an arms race with the motive of enhancing their security. With each step up in the arming process, however, the other side responds with a higher threshold of commitment, ensuring continuous incremental escalation. Thus, the pursuit of security paradoxically leads only to greater insecurity.

In a sense, this is the dilemma of facing Israel today. It wishes to guarantee its security, but that will never be possible under the present conditions. The Gulf war merely underlines that fact, for neither did Israel's weapons of mass destruction deter attack by Iraq, nor did its illegal possession of territory hold supposed strategic value. In these days of sophisticated ballistic technology, there can be only one sure guarantee of security. That is not a better weapons system, or an extra yard of land. The sole path to true security is the achievement of equitable and sustainable peace.

The "land-for-peace" formula, together with the recognition of the rights of Palestinians to self-determination, is central to that achievement. The return territories occupied in 1967 is absolutely integral to the peace process, and any attempt to depict it otherwise can only be based on disrespect for the legitimacy of international law. There is no other basis for the resolution of the conflict. Only if the will of the international community and the primacy of international law are upheld — and seen to be upheld — can the peoples of the

region enjoy the results of peace, and live in dignity, prosperity and true security. The peace we seek goes beyond a state of non-belligerency to one of trust, coordination, and fruitful cooperation over issues such as water, arms control, refugees and the environment. These issues are increasingly pressing, and must be addressed soon. But there is a great deal of ground to make up if the traditional barriers between the sides are to be lowered.

Perhaps the most vital element of the peace process currently in motion is the implementation of measures to build public confidence on both sides. The most urgent and central of these is a freeze on settlement construction in the occupied territories. Such a freeze would be a mark of good faith and a valuable contribution towards the breakdown of psychological barriers that exist for both parties. Indeed, all parties must refrain from actions which may undermine the continuation of the process. This opportunity has been nearly half a century in coming; we believe that some of the parties wish to wait so long for another opportunity, and that they will therefore act only in our common best interests.

Israeli settlements in the occupied territories do not only violate international law, but undermine the primacy of war as an instrument of Israeli foreign policy. Jewish acquisition of land in Palestine has served as the basic vehicle of nation-building. Moreover, the question of settlements has repercussions beyond the occupied territories. It impinges directly on Jordan's national security, and the social, economic and environmental interests of our population.

I mentioned earlier some figures relating to the allocation of water in the West Bank. It is appropriate here to review briefly the history of relations between Jordan and Israel with respect to water. After Israel took control of the River Jordan by diverting its flow in 1964, Jordan began to build a dam on the River Yarmouk. This was deliberately destroyed by Israeli soldiers in the last hours of the 1967 war; and later plans to build a dam further up the Yarmouk were met only with Israeli belligerence. We believe that such policies are conducive only to continued confrontation, and the furtherance of the psychological barriers and material inquiries that characterise relations between the sides in the conflict. We believe that now is an appropriate time, and that this would be an appropriate place, for the implementation of confidence building measures on the part of Israel.

I should like to make some observations at this point concerning the effect upon Jordan of the mass displacement of people that has taken place in the Middle East since Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990. Jordan's position differs in several respects from that of other countries which have received displaced people during the recent crisis.

In addition to accommodating large numbers of displaced migrant workers and professionals who were en route to their home countries, Jordan has had to cope with up to 300,000 of its own "returnees" from Kuwait, Iraq and other Gulf states. This amounts to an increase of 10 per cent on a population that already comprises the world's highest proportion of refugees to indigenous population, at one quarter. I would add briefly that the term "returnee" had no real significance for many of these involuntary migrants, as most of them had been away from Jordan for decades, and a large proportion had even been born and brought up

abroad. Their home, on any reasonable construction of the word, was the country which they were obliged to leave. This massive influx placed a tremendous strain on Jordan's educational, health and cultural services.

I am proud to tell you today that Jordan rose to that challenge, drawing on the same spirit and determination with which the challenges of the 1948 and 1967 crises were faced.

In essence, then, our division is of a Middle Eastern Helsinki process, a conference on security and cooperation for the Middle East. We believe that such a model would eliminate the political economy of despair. Democritisation, freedom of expression, human rights and greater awareness of a reliance on the political and economic dimensions of security provide a route towards the alternative political economy of peace, security and progress. The participation of states with a similar experience in conflict resolution is of course imperative to assist the countries of the Middle East in overcoming their difficulties.

We are aware that this vision requires the laying aside of dogma, of prejudice, of traditional hostilities. But we must learn tolerance for different ideologies. All ideologies have certain common points, together with their differences. We must develop the breadth of vision to identify and build upon these common points, while remaining firm in our demand that every government respect those universal rights of human beings and fulfil those universal requirements I spoke of earlier. These requirements, like so many of the challenges of today's world, go beyond questions of national strategy or ideological labels.

I mentioned earlier some figures relating to the allocation of water in the West Bank. It is appropriate here to review briefly the history of relations between Jordan and Israel with respect to water. After Israel took control of the River Jordan by diverting its flow in 1964, Jordan began to build a dam on the River Yarmouk. This was deliberately destroyed by Israeli soldiers in the last hours of the 1967 war; and later plans to build a dam further up the Yarmouk were met only with Israeli belligerence. We believe that such policies are conducive only to continued confrontation, and the furtherance of the psychological barriers and material inquiries that characterise relations between the sides in the conflict. We believe that now is an appropriate time, and that this would be an appropriate place, for the implementation of confidence building measures on the part of Israel.

I should like to make some observations at this point concerning the effect upon Jordan of the mass displacement of people that has taken place in the Middle East since Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990. Jordan's position differs in several respects from that of other countries which have received displaced people during the recent crisis.

We are in the past, questions of demography, resources and ideology have been addressed almost exclusively through the dimension of military security. But reliance on this dimension has not, as yet, produced a situation of true peace, security and stability in the region. For example, border disputes have in the past been settled by military force. In the Gulf alone there have been no fewer than 22 active border disputes since 1990. This has in turn fuelled military spending, leading to massive military debts as eager suppliers of arms compete for customers. The interrelation between energy, arms and debt is plain to see in this context. It is an enduring and telling irony that the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council, empowered to uphold peace around the world, together account for approximately 90 per cent of the world's arms trade. This over-emphasis on the military dimension has given rise to what may be termed the political economy of despair.

We in Jordan seek to take another approach. It is an innovative, even ambitious, approach, but a brief parallel with developments in Europe will serve to illustrate why we believe it to be the only one with a chance of ultimate success. Europe, like the Middle East, was plagued by war and internal rivalry for centuries. It is only now proceeding down the path of integration and cooperation. Europeans view this process, the regional conference on security and cooperation, as the most likely to yield lasting resolutions satisfactory to all. This is a belief shared by Jordan.

"As long as there is poverty in the world, I can never be rich, even if I have a billion dollars. As long as diseases are rampant and millions of people in this world cannot expect to live more than twenty-eight or thirty years, I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. This is the way our word is made. No individual or nation can stand out boasting of being independent. We are interdependent."

I commented this address with the words of Dr. Martin Luther King. I should like to end it in the same way, and as I recall his words, I would like you all to bear in mind the conditions that Palestinians in the occupied territories have had to endure, conditions that we must hope are now drawing to their inevitable end, conditions that each and every one of you may play a part in alleviating.

"As long as there is poverty in the world, I can never be rich, even if I have a billion dollars. As long as diseases are rampant and millions of people in this world cannot expect to live more than twenty-eight or thirty years, I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. This is the way our word is made. No individual or nation can stand out boasting of being independent. We are interdependent."

The writer said that the presence of the Palestinian negotiator has shown the world that the Palestinians can battle with the Israelis through continued resistance, by all available means, and at the negotiating table.

Ahmad Dabbas wrote in Sawt Al Shaab, a column criticising the little amount of money collected in Jordan and elsewhere in support of the Palestinian people under Israeli rule.

The writer said that the Palestinians had offered too many sacrifices in the course of protecting the Arab land, and that the Jordanian National Committee for the Support of the Palestinians should try harder and work strenuously for the sake of ensuring sufficient help to fuel the Palestinian resistance.

Referring to the sanctions imposed on Iraq, Salameh El-Kour said that Iraq has served as a strategic asset for the Arabs in the face of the Israeli enemy, but the Arabs have chosen to abandon the Iraqis in their ordeal.

The writer said that the Arabs are doing nothing to help save the thousands of hungry and sick children of Iraq.

He said that the Arab Nation has the means to end the injustice but its leaders are choosing to allow the Iraqis to starve and to see their own countries' wealth being pillaged by the aggressors.

If the will of the international community and the primacy of international law are upheld, the peoples of the region can enjoy the results of peace

THE WEEK IN PRINT

Israel places obstacles in the path of negotiations

Washington's rules of the game as a blow to the U.S. dignity and one which should be exploited by the Arab negotiators.

Features

Talks resume on Monday

(Continued from page 1)

to the Israelis that the meetings be held in "sequential form" to solve this problem. "We are aware that the Israeli delegation is made up of 14 members and headed by one person, which means that if we had meetings at the same time, they would necessarily divide into seven each and one of the meetings would not be chaired by the head of the Israeli party," Dr. Anani explained.

"To resolve this problem, we proposed that they be held in sequential form so that it would be attended by the heads of both parties to the bilateral negotiations. Now it is almost agreed upon."

The Israeli demand for dividing the joint delegation into subcommittees has been dropped and an agreement has been reached that issues on the separate agendas of the Jordan-Israel track and the Palestinian-Israel track could be discussed in sub-committees which would break out from the two

tracks rather than the joint delegation itself.

"Now we have two delegations — an Israeli one and a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation — three parties to the two-track negotiations — Israeli, Jordanian and Palestinian," Dr. Anani said.

"From any one of the two separate tracks, sub-committees may be formed to discuss the separate issues on the one or the other agenda, the subcommittees, to stress the difference, will not stem from the joint delegation itself but from the separate tracks."

The subcommittees, Dr. Anani explained, "will be formed but their number and designation will be determined as necessary."

Another issue that has also been almost resolved was over the agenda of the bilateral negotiations in the Palestinian-Israeli track.

The Israelis have insisted that the agenda of their talks with Palestinians include only the one item of the interim self-government arrange-

ment, which has come to be known as ISGA.

This proposal was rejected by the joint delegation, and a final protocol, which Dr. Anani said has almost been accepted, would set the agenda for the talks to "Palestinian-Israeli matters including interim self government arrangement."

The joint delegation had argued that the letter of assurances from the Americans had specified that the Palestinian-Israeli agenda would "begin with ISGA but not be exclusively on that subject," Dr. Anani said.

"The Israelis told us that they don't take orders from anybody, in this case the Americans; and that they have their own authority, legitimacy and sovereignty."

In commenting on Thursday morning's talks with the leaders of the joint delegation Israeli Deputy Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that "couch talks" continued on the Jordanian-Palestinian front, but that the "gap is apparently narrowing."

However, that it was still "too early

to tell," and that the Israeli negotiators would make "good faith attempts" to bridge the gap (Thursday) afternoon. Mr. Netanyahu said further that negotiator Eliyakim Rubenstein was "working very patiently" to arrive at an understanding.

Asked repeatedly if Israel's ongoing settlement activity contradicted its claim to want peace, Mr. Netanyahu repeated the position he has argued all week; that is, the Palestinian problem should be solved through Jordan, and not through "excising" another state out of the "disputed" territories. He claimed that it was unfair that the Arabs were continuing to "settle" the territories while Israel "is not allowed to do anything." He said further that if peace meant "excising peace" then it would "fragment the international order... tear it asunder."

Inter-Arab contacts and internal Jordanian delegation meetings continued Friday in a concerted effort to further strengthen Arab coordination and Jordanian-Palestinian harmony.

The dinner was also attended by Air France's Jordan manager.

Syrian talks

(Continued from page 1)

Yosef Hadass and Uri Lubrani, co-chairmen of the Israeli delegation to the peace talks with Lebanon, said the two sides had "laid down some principles of a peace treaty between Israel and Lebanon in the future."

Mr. Hadass said after Thursday's meeting that security arrangements were being discussed in the framework of a peace treaty between the two countries. "We consider (resolution) 425 as part of the process.

U.S. newspapers report on talks

(Continued from page 1)

approach would also require Palestinians to refrain from characterizing their negotiating group as a "delegation."

However, these sources indicated that there was still disagreement about the nature of the two-track approach, with the Palestinians and Jordanians seeking to split the issues along national lines, and the Israelis insisting on what they call a "topical" approach. This approach is said to involve creating working groups to deal with issues such as Palestinian self-government, land tenure and water allocation. "Such a division would inevitably blur the line between questions that apply solely to Jordan or solely to the Palestinians and require both to be involved in the negotiations," according to the report.

All reports note that disagreement also remains over how many Palestinians and Jordanians should participate in such a track,

'Peace needs broader vision'

(Continued from page 1)

guarantee of security," he said. "That is not a better weapons system or an extra yard of land. The sole path to true security is the achievement of equitable and sustainable peace."

An Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories in line with Resolutions 242 and 338 is an "integral part" of the Middle East peace process, he affirmed.

The Crown Prince called on Israel to begin implementing confidence-building measures so that the momentum of the peace process could be maintained and goodwill could be displayed as a catalyst to arriving at a just and equitable solution to the conflict.

Such measures, he said, should start with an immediate freeze in Israel's settlement activity in the occupied territories.

The Crown Prince elaborated on the repercussions of the lingering Middle East conflict on Jordan and the danger inherent in the continued Israeli settlement activity.

"Sixty per cent of the land today, 100 per cent of the land and 100 per cent of the people tomorrow," he said referring to the consequences of Israeli designs and actions aimed at securing the land without people and the Jewish state's arguments that Jordan was the homeland of the Palestinian people.

He also cited the burdens Jordan had faced and is still facing as a result of the Gulf crisis.

Jordan rose to the challenge of coping with the influx of hundreds of thousands of third country nationals fleeing the Gulf war theatre — "when you were watching the build up to the Gulf crisis on CNN, we in Jordan were digging latrines in the desert!" he said.

Jordan is facing severe economic pressure as a result of the problems posed by the return of 300,000 expatriates from Kuwait, Iraq and other Gulf states, he noted. The "returns" — representing an addition of 10 per cent to Jordan's population — added to the burdens of the King, which was already housing "the world's highest proportion of refugees to indigenous population."

Prince Hassan referred to studies which indicated that Jordan needed \$4.5 billion in five years to maintain the current standard of living for its people in the wake of the massive rise in population and compared it with Israel's request for \$10 billion in American loan guarantees to help absorb a comparable number of Soviet Jewish emigrants.

The pressures that have been brought to bear upon Jordan, he said, appear to be aimed at diluting any positive contribution from the Kingdom to the peace process.

The Crown Prince concluded his keynote address with an obvious message to the Americans by recalling

We are here to discuss peace." Both Mr. Hadass and Mr. Lubrani refused to elaborate.

Chief of the Lebanese delegation Sabeh Shammas told reporters that discussions with Israel continued on a businesslike manner" on substantive issues.

"We air our differences and we shall continue in that spirit," Mr. Shammas said. "We shall persevere and we shall show patience and we will continue to be here until we conclude some positive results," he said. The Lebanese-Israeli talks will also reconvene Monday.

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Sports

JORDAN BASKETBALL ROUNDUP

By Aileen Bannayan
Special to the Jordan Times

The decisive second round of the first basketball championship has begun with four games at Al Ahli and the Sports Club in Amman as Al Ahli beat Al Jali, Al Jazirah crushed Al Jazirah, Al Hussein beat Al Karak and Al Watani beat Al Jali.

The first round of the championship ended on Dec. 4 with Al Orthodox — who scored a convincing win of 74-60 over Al Ahli — leading the standings, followed by titleholders Al Jali, Al Jazirah came in third and Al Jazirah in fourth. They were respectively followed by Al Hussein, Al Watani, Al Ashrafieh and Al Jali.

The top four will now play a round of 12 matches while the other four will play a round of 10 to determine the rankings from 5-8 and the teams that will be relegated to the second division.

There were no surprises in this week's matches but there were some disappointments as basketball fans failed to appear to cheer their favorite teams and the continued absence of the fans was a setback and a disappointment to the organizers — Jordan Basketball Federation — as well as the participating teams.

The timing of the matches (as most of them begin quite early at 5:30 or 6) is certainly a factor in relation to the cold and rainy weather that has prevailed over the country this week.

In one of two matches played Tuesday Al Ahli beat Al Jali but not before Al Jali put up a good fight, especially in the first half which Al Ahli won 31-23.

Al Ahli's man-to-man defense limited Al Jali's maneuverability and scoring, enabling Al Ahli to lead at the beginning, however, Al Jali managed to catch up at 23-23 only to lose the first half by a difference of three points. Al Ahli played at a fast pace in the second half closely watching Al Jali's Raed Jaber while taking advantage of his turnovers to score and expand the difference back to their defense and Al Jali's inaccuracy, to win the match 90-63.

In a statement to the Jordan Times, Al Ahli's head coach Rizq Al Misri commented on the match, while comparing it to his team's only loss to Al Orthodox last week, saying: "We played much better defense today. Al Jali were a good

rival in the first half but their resistance faltered in the second half."

"Our scoring ability was way below average in our match against Al Orthodox. Because our players were not successful in shooting, Al Orthodox did not play man-to-man defense, thus securing their defensive rebound. Our players may have also thought that it wouldn't be a very difficult game as Al Orthodox missed some key players."

Al Ahli will play Al Orthodox twice in the second round. If both teams score alternate wins they will then play a deciding three out of five games to determine the champion. At present it seems it will be quite difficult for Al Ahli to retain the title as Al Orthodox play with greater confidence and determination than ever before.

"The pressure is on us as we are the titleholders — but we are missing a key player (Naser Bushnaq)," Misri said. Adding that "Naser will miss this basketball season, hopefully to come back for many more seasons in top form."

In another match Al Orthodox scored a crushing 104-48 win over Al Jazirah.

Al Jazirah could not stop their foes from scoring as Al Orthodox won the first half with a big difference of 63-20!

Al Orthodox led 77-26 in the second half before Al Jazirah realized they had to improve their score which was too little too late.

On Wednesday Al Hussein beat Al Karak 98-55.

Al Karak, who have shown a remarkable improvement since the beginning of the championship, played well but lost the first half 33-23. Al Hussein's fast breaks, better fitness and experience enabled them to expand the difference in the second half and win the match.

In Thursday's match, Al Watani scored a 74-55 win over Al Ashrafieh, the first half ending 37-21 for Al Watani.

Al Ashrafieh, who played much better in their previous match against Al Watani (as they led at the beginning but lost the match 106-94) may have lost the chance of holding on to their position in the first division as they have been beaten either Al Hussein or Al Watani to secure the necessary points.

In the coming week Al Ashrafieh plays Al Hussein and Al Karak meets Al Watani Sunday. Al Jali plays Al Orthodox Wednesday while Al Ashrafieh plays Al Karak and Al Hussein clashes with Al Watani Thursday.

UEFA to decide on Soviet, Yugoslav teams

STOCKHOLM (R) — UEFA will meet Tuesday to decide how to deal with the disintegration of

the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia — both finalists in next year's European Soccer Cham-

pionships.

"A one-day meeting will be held in Geneva Tuesday during which we will establish our policies for the Soviet and Yugoslav situation," Lennart Johansson, president of European Soccer's governing body (UEFA), said Friday.

UEFA will decide when the two could cease to exist as soccer nations and draw up rules for their possible replacement in the eight-team finals in Sweden in June, Johansson said.

West led the king of spades. Had that declarer panicked on seeing dummy and shifted to a trump, declarer would have had an easy path. South would have had no trouble limiting losses to two trumps and a spade.

West reasoned that declarer had to have at least a red ace and the king of diamonds for his two bids. If so, the most the defenders could hope for was one diamond trick and with the finesse working, nothing in clubs. The setting tricks, if any, had to dummy's diamonds would take care of declarer's side-suit losers.

A forcing game was clearly the right tactic, so West continued with the ace of spades. Declarer ruffed in dummy and led the king of hearts, but the defenders were on their toes. East grabbed the ace and continued with another spade, and declarer was a dead duck. If South did not ruff with dummy's queen, the defenders would get two spade tricks and two trumps. And if declarer did choose to ruff, the defenders would get three trump tricks along with the spade already in the bank. Down one, although South could have landed the game by taking full advantage of the favorable lie of the cards.

When it looks as if declarer intended ruffing losers on the board, it is often a sound tactic to lead trumps. However, there are times when it is obvious that an attempt to limit dummy's ruffing power would be an exercise in futility. In that event you might be able to force a fatal weakness by making dummy ruff.

Now South bid aggressively to reach a fair game. North's auction showed extra values and Soth judged that, since there were no ruffed values in spades, game would be a reasonable shot if partner held

good trumps. Hence, South's three hearts with only seven high-card points, and North's acceptance of the invitation.

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Financial Markets Jordan Times
in co-operation with Cairo Amman Bank

Currency	NEW YORK CLOSE Date 11/12/91	TOKYO CLOSE Date 12/12/91
Sterling Pound*	1.8050	1.8100
Deutsche Mark	1.5760	1.5740
Swiss Franc	1.3925	1.3900
French Franc	5.3835	5.3820 **
Japanese Yen	129.30	128.90
European Currency Unit	1.2910	1.2924**

* USD per JTC
** European Opening or 8:30 a.m. GMT

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	4.81	4.43	4.37	4.50
Sterling Pound	10.62	10.50	10.43	10.43
Deutsche Mark	9.43	9.43	9.43	9.38
Swiss Franc	8.12	8.00	7.93	7.87
French Franc	10.00	9.87	9.87	9.75
Japanese Yen	6.18	5.93	5.71	5.56
European Currency Unit	10.62	10.56	10.43	10.25

Interest rates for amounts exceeding U.S. Dollars 1,000,000 or equivalent.

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Interest rates for amounts exceeding U.S. Dollars 1,000,000 or equivalent.

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.679	0.681
Sterling Pound	1.2292	1.2353
Deutsche Mark	0.431	0.4332
Swiss Franc	0.4687	0.4911
French Franc	0.1263	0.1269
Japanese Yen*	0.5261	0.5267
Dutch Guilder	0.3825	0.3844
Swedish Krona	0.1178	0.1184
Italian Lira*	0.0571	0.0574
Belgian Franc	0.02089	0.02099

* Per 100 Other Currencies Date: 12/12/91

Currency	Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.7720	1.7780
Lebanese Lira*	0.0770	0.0777
Saudi Riyal	0.1807	0.1813
Kuwaiti Dinar	-	-
Qatari Riyal	0.1840	0.1849
Egyptian Pound	0.2000	0.2170
Omani Riyal	1.7380	1.7460
UAE Dirham	0.1840	0.1849
Greek Drachma*	0.3650	0.3780
Cypriot Pound	1.500	1.5200

* Per 100 Other Currencies Date: 12/12/91

Currency	Bid	Offer
Index	11/12/91	Close
All-Share	127.68	127.50
Banking Sector	105.44	105.66
Insurance Sector	128.45	128.69
Industry Sector	160.69	159.87
Services Sector	143.20	142.95

December 31, 1990 = 100

CAB Indices for American Financial Market	Date: 12/12/91
Index	11/12/91
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Momentum builds for new commonwealth; Gorbachev hints at resignation

MOSCOW (AP) — Boris Yeltsin's new commonwealth gained momentum Friday with his pledge that five more republics could join as equal partners, making it almost certain that President Mikhail Gorbachev would resign.

Mr. Gorbachev is likely to resign when the legislatures of most of the remaining 12 Soviet republics formally vote to join the commonwealth of independent states, said a Kremlin source. That could come as early as next week, said the source, who spoke on condition that he not be further identified.

The leaders of Kazakhstan and the predominantly Muslim republics of Kirgizia, Tadzhikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan agreed to join the new commonwealth if they are recognized as co-founders.

Participation by the five republics, which have a combined population of about 50 million, is crucial to the success of the commonwealth formed Sunday by the three Slavic republics of Russia, Byelorussia and Ukraine.

Soviet and Western observers have warned that if the Muslim republics do not join the commonwealth, they may form a separate group, setting up a volatile ethnic and religious split.

"We understand the drive of the leaders of Byelorussia, Russia and Ukraine to create in the place of previously shackled republics, a commonwealth of independent law-governed states," the five republics said following a meeting in the Turkmen capital of Ashkhabad.

"All the states forming the commonwealth should be recognised as its founders," said their statement carried in Soviet media.

"The commonwealth cannot be formed on ethnic, religious or any other principles violating human rights and the rights of nations."

Uzbekistan cautioned that it would not make a formal application until

after its presidential elections on Dec. 29.

TASS said the statement emphasized the need to preserve central control over nuclear weapons, strategic forces and the navy. Kazakhstan is one of four Soviet republics which houses nuclear weapons.

Radio Russia said Mr. Yeltsin telephoned Uzbek President Islam Karimov to welcome their membership.

"Karimov has received an affirmative answer to the question of the possibility of the Central Asian region taking part in founding the commonwealth," Radio Russia said.

The restructuring effort comes as the government battles one crisis after another, the latest a fuel shortage that TASS reported forced more than half of all Soviet airports to close Thursday and led to the cancellation of most domestic flights of the state Aeroflot airline.

On Thursday, the Russian parliament overwhelmingly ratified the commonwealth agreement, and Mr. Gorbachev told reporters he would quit if the republics clearly chose it over his proposed union treaty.

"If that's how the process ends, I will resign. It is completely clear, no question about it," he said.

A source close to Mr. Gorbachev said Friday that the Soviet president likely would announce his resignation in a speech after lawmakers in seven of the 12 former Soviet republics voted to join the commonwealth. It was not clear how quickly that would happen.

Mr. Gorbachev is seeking to pre-serve a single state with a central government in Moscow. The commonwealth would make each of the republics fully independent except for joint control over nuclear weapons.

Minsk, the Byelorussian capital, would be home to the commonwealth's coordinating body, which

has not yet been created or defined.

Mr. Yeltsin announced Thursday that he had the support of the Soviet military, and Moldavian President Mircea Snegur said his republic had a "positive attitude" toward the new formation.

In a short, straightforward address to the Russian legislature before it gave its approval, Mr. Yeltsin sought to portray the commonwealth as not just a Slavic organization but open to all Soviet republics.

"I cannot agree that it is based on an ethnic, Slavic principle," he said. "We have equal respect for people of different nationalities."

Mr. Yeltsin said the commonwealth represented perhaps the last chance for preserving order and cooperation.

"Obstructing it now ... will inevitably doom people to new suffering, not only plunging our state into chaos but creating a real threat for mankind," he warned.

The popular Russian president said the need for a commonwealth had become apparent since the failed August coup, as eight of the 15 former Soviet republics refused to join Mr. Gorbachev's proposed confederation.

He dismissed Mr. Gorbachev's criticism that the commonwealth would lead to the destruction of the nation, countering that it would "save everything that is healthy and can be saved."

Russian lawmakers approved the commonwealth by a vote of 188-6, meaning that the legislature of all three Slavic republics have now ratified the treaty.

President Askar Akayev of Kirgizia reiterated Friday the republics were "not excluding the possibility of using Mikhail Gorbachev in the new commonwealth ... but it all depends on Gorbachev himself."

But in a rambling, two-hour interview with Soviet reporters Thursday, Mr. Gorbachev edged closer to resigning, saying, "the main work of my life is done."

He pledged to accept the decision of the republic parliaments but added: "I have expressed my point of view and I will continue to express it, because I am convinced that we are now making the biggest mistake since the beginning of perestroika. ... We are destroying a state when it needs to be reformed."

In what sounded much like a farewell statement, Mr. Gorbachev said "a great deal befall my fate" and took pride that "I have managed — without mistakes — to push through the main ideas of perestroika."

He said he would reject a role in the new commonwealth even if offered a ceremonial job: "I do not see myself as guest of honour at a wedding."

Meanwhile several people are reportedly killed and wounded Friday as simmering ethnic tensions in the breakaway Soviet Republics of Moldova boiled over into fighting.

Soviet news agencies said police of the Romanian-majority government fought with militia of the Russian-speaking minority at Dubossary, 50 kilometers north-east of the capital Kishinev.

Russian television said the clashes were still continuing, with government forces occupying the south and west of the town and guards of the self-proclaimed Dniestr Republic, which is opposed to Moldovan secession, in control of the north and east.

The Interfax Agency quoted a Dniestr spokesman as saying three guardmen had been killed. A local journalist in Kishinev quoted official radio as reporting dead and wounded on the government side as well.

It was the first major confrontation in the republics in a year. The Moldova government has declared independence from the Soviet Union and is moving towards some form of unification with neighbouring Romania.

Leaders of the Russian and Ukrainian minorities, which make up some 27 per cent of the population of 4.5 million, have declared the secession from Moldova of the Dniestr region, the east bank of the Dniestr River.

TASS said an unconfirmed report put the death toll at 13 and that there had been civilian casualties.

Fighting was reported around the town of Sisak and Nova Gradiška south east of Zagreb as well as around Pakrac and Lipik just to the north.

The embattled Eastern Croatian stronghold of Osijek came under heavy attack overnight, local defence officials said. The Adriatic port of Zadar also came under fire.

Meanwhile in New York, U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar warned European nations that recognising the independence of Croatia and neighbouring Slovenia could widen the war in Yugoslavia. Both republics declared their independence on June 25.

Croatia and Slovenia reportedly plan to establish diplomatic relations next week, the Belgrade-based Tanjug News Agency reported Thursday.

Many officials believe European recognition of Croatia would lead ethnic Serbs in the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina and elsewhere in Yugoslavia to take up arms in a war that until now has been confined to Croatia.

The European Community is expected to discuss recognition of Slovenia and Croatia when its foreign ministers meet Monday in Brussels.

In a further sign of the splintering of the Yugoslav Federation, Macedonia's President, Kiro Gligorov, asked the European Community to consider recognising his republic as well at the Monday meeting, Tanjug reported.

Macedonians voted overwhelmingly in favour of sovereignty in a referendum in September.

In recent days, there have been reports of Croatian fighters turning back Serbian advances in a few regions of their war-scarred republic.

The Croats reportedly took 13 Serb-held villages on the central front earlier this week.

Croatian radio reported a heavy attack began Friday morning on Nova Gradiška, on the main Zagreb-Belgrade Highway. The rump Serbian-dominated presidency, in a statement issued to the federal Tanjug News Agency, welcomed Mr. Perez de Cuellar's statement. It said recognising the independence of any part of Yugoslavia would open the way to secession on European soil."

The statement reiterated that a solution to the Yugoslav crisis should be the "result of a democratic procedure, with all the nations of Yugoslavia participating."

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